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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 12 November 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Palestinian terrorist campaign against the citizens of Israel crossed yet another threshold of depravity on Sunday when, in an act of unspeakable hatred and cruelty, forces loyal to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat infiltrated an Israeli Kibbutz and shot to death five civilians, including a mother and her two young sons, in cold blood.

The attack occurred shortly after midnight (local time) on Sunday evening at Kibbutz Metzer, a tranquil Israeli farming community located just a few kilometres from the edge of the West Bank that was renowned for its friendly relations with nearby Arab villages. That tranquillity was shattered when a Palestinian gunman infiltrated the Kibbutz, burst into the home of Revital Ohayon, age 34, and into the room where she was reading her two sons Matan and Noam, ages 4 and 5 respectively, a bedtime story. All three were shot and killed at close range. The children's father, hysterical with grief, arrived shortly after to find a room riddled with bullet holes and sheets and pillows stained with blood.

The terrorist also shot and killed Tirza Damari, age 42, who was walking along a path with her boyfriend, and Yitzhak Dori, age 44, the secretary of the Kibbutz. At Dori's funeral, Arabs and Jews joined together in accompanying him to his final resting place. In contrast to those who consider funerals the appropriate venue to celebrate terrorist attacks as heroic acts of "resistance", mourners for Dori spoke of their commitment to working for peace and coexistence and of their refusal to allow their dreams of peace to succumb to violence.

The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the terrorist arm of Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, proudly claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement broadcast on *Al Manar Television* in Beirut, the satellite network of the terrorist organization Hizbullah. Meanwhile in Cairo, Osama Hamdan, a Hamas representative, praised the terrorist that carried out the attack, saying: "Hamas is not the only one that adopts

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armed struggle against the Israelis, but also an organization that is subordinate to the Palestinian Authority."

Israel holds the Palestinian leadership fully responsible for this latest attack that has brought the Palestinian terrorist campaign to new heights of brutality and savagery. Despite more than two years of violence and terrorism, and the repeated calls of the international community and the Security Council, the Palestinian Authority has failed to take any action that might prevent future terrorist attacks. It has failed to bring terrorists to justice, to prevent its territory from serving as a base for terrorist operations, and to end all acts of violence, terrorism and incitement, as is its obligation under international law, in particular the recently adopted Security Council resolution 1435 (2002).

On the contrary, the Palestinian leadership has presided over years of unrelenting incitement and demonization of Israel in the official Palestinian media, a Palestinian school curriculum which delegitimizes and denies the right of Jews and Israelis to exist and to live in peace and security, and the official celebration of terrorist and suicide bombers as heroes of the Palestinian people. Only within a ruthless terrorist network that has so totally dehumanized its enemies could the murder of innocent children in their mother's arms be considered a praiseworthy act.

In yet another shocking display of contempt and duplicity, the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority has called for the investigation of an attack for which his own forces are responsible. Clearly, this step is only the latest ploy of a terrorist practitioner intent on avoiding any international condemnation. If anything is to be investigated, it must be the systematic and deliberate policy of glorification of terrorism and suicide bombings, which are crimes against humanity, the indoctrination of young Palestinians into a culture of hatred and rejection of Jews and Israelis, and the continuing financial, moral and logistical support for terrorism originating from the highest levels of the Palestinian Authority, in defiance of signed commitments reached with Israel and the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 1373 (2001).

Israel calls on the international community to condemn this horrible crime and to insist not only that the Palestinian Authority comply immediately with its obligations to halt acts of terrorism, but also that those responsible for organizing and inciting acts of terrorism are brought to justice, in accordance with resolution 1435 (2002).

Israel also calls on the Palestinian Authority to give substance to its condemnation by taking steps to reverse the culture of death and martyrdom it has deliberately and systematically fostered for more than a decade. When the lives of innocent children are viewed solely as instruments to be used and destroyed at will, even the best attempts at peace and reconciliation are destined to failure. The pervasive spirit of intolerance that celebrates the killing of women and children remains the foremost obstacle to the realization of the vision of peace and coexistence that the people of the region need and deserve.

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative